



49. 1210



The
Apparition of the Blessed Virgin

ON THE
MOUNTAINS

OF
THE ALPS.



London James Burns

mdcccxlx.



*The following account is derived from the pamphlet
of Monseigneur Clement Villecourt, Bishop of La
Rochelle.*



SOME ACCOUNT
OF
The Apparition
OF
THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

IN the pamphlet from which the following account is taken, the Bishop of La Rochelle has given many details respecting his journey to La Salette, and the opportunities which he there had of forming his opinion respecting the truth of the reported Apparition. It has not been thought necessary to translate the whole publication, and sufficient only has been given clearly to shew what actually took place in the Vision with which the two children were favoured; some letters also have been added, selected from those which were received by the author, testifying to the miraculous effect of the water which issued from the spot where the Blessed Virgin

appeared. The Bishop thus states the way in which the subject was first brought before him :

“I received information respecting the *Apparition* of which I am about to give some account, not long after it happened, from a person of much reputation, whose sobriety of judgment had never been questioned. The letter which conveyed the intelligence to me was accompanied by three important documents : one being the copy of a letter written by the Curé of Corps to one of his friends, in which he gave the whole narrative ; the second was the relation of a nun, to whom, about the same time, the same revelation had been made as to the shepherd children ; and the third paper contained a more detailed account of what had been heard and seen by the two children. I did not know what to do ; whether to believe or to disbelieve what was thus announced to me. I had great confidence in the discretion of my informant, but considered that something must perhaps be allowed for the too easy credulity of those from whom the story had originally come.

“I took, therefore, the resolution of writing to the Bishop of Grenoble, to ask him if he would have the goodness to inform me how far I might trust the account which I had received. I wrote at the same time, and by the same post, to the Curate of Corps for more particulars.

“ The answer of the Bishop of Grenoble stated, that every thing appeared miraculous in this occurrence ; but that he would deliver no judgment on the matter until it should have been sufficiently examined, and until he could produce sure and incontestable proofs of the justness of his sentence. A committee of sober men was about to be formed, who would narrowly examine the whole, and present to the Prelate the result of their deliberation, in order that he might have a full and perfect knowledge of the subject before he gave his decision. This was, of course, the wisest plan, and the most conformable to the laws of the Church ; for it is not sufficient that a Bishop should be individually convinced of the truth of a fact to make a public decision ; but it is necessary that he should have it in his power to confirm it to others by the most authentic and indisputable documents.

“ M. Melin, the Priest of Corps, wrote to me, that he was perfectly convinced : he was living on the spot ; he had questioned the children, — who, since the time of the Apparition, have always lived in his parish, — and he had opportunities of seeing them at all times every day. Nothing would have been easier than for him to have detected any imposition, were it conceivable that any such contrivance had existed. The candour and the natural unreflecting simplicity of Maximin were sufficient evidence against the

possibility of his being privy to a forgery ; and the timidity of Melanie rendered her absolutely beyond all suspicion ; not to mention the incapacity of the one and the other, whose ignorance and simple rusticity were known to all their neighbours. I was not aware at the time that La Salette, the scene of the Apparition, had a pastor of its own, otherwise I should have written directly to him, being firmly resolved openly to contradict the story if it were false, and as boldly to assert the truth of it if I should acquire incontestable proofs of its reality. I was, moreover, urged to this by the frequent applications made to me by ecclesiastics in my diocese, who wished to know whether I would authorise them to mention in their pulpits a subject which would contribute so much to the general edification. It would perhaps have been more prudent to have waited until there should appear some authoritative decision on the subject ; but I felt so convinced of the truth of the story, from the additional evidence which was continually being brought before me, that I did not hesitate to allude to the Apparition myself in several parishes in my diocese." The story is as follows :

In the parish of La Salette, in the midst of the Alps, and at about three hours' journey from the little town of Corps, Baptiste Prat, of the hamlet des Ablandins, had, for about seven

months, in his service, in quality of shepherdess, a young girl named Françoise Melanie Matthieu, born at Corps, on the 7th of November, 1831, of very poor parents. Peter Selme, an inhabitant of the same hamlet, having for some days his own shepherd lying ill, went to beg a poor man named Giraud, of Corps, to lend to him, until his sick servant had recovered, his son, Peter Maximin Giraud, born at Corps, Aug. 27, 1835. This little boy and this young girl scarcely knew each other before the event which I am about to narrate. It even appears that they had never met each other, or made any acquaintance, until the eve of the day on which the memorable Apparition happened, while they were feeding together their flocks on one of the mountains of La Salette, called Sous les Baisses. On the 19th of September, 1846, Maximin and Melanie, provided with their little stock of food for the day, left the hamlet des Ablandins at sunrise, and led their flocks to the Mont aux Baisses, which is separated from the other mountains by a deep ravine, called Sezia ; they arrived about mid-day on the broad flat of the mountain. The cold mists which crown these heights the greater part of the day had entirely disappeared ; there was nothing to allay the heat of the sun's rays : the day was very fine, but the heat was most intense. The two children came down to the bottom of the ravine, and sat down near the source

of an intermittent spring, which then was dry. The stream, which gently ran along the bottom of the ravine, was slightly swollen by the melting of the snow, which was now hastening to disappear on the neighbouring heights. They soaked their bread to soften it in the water of the stream, and made their little repast in peace on the stones which lay there : they then lay down a few paces off and fell asleep. After a short nap, Melanie was the first who awoke ; she called Maximin to go with her and see where their flocks were. They crossed the stream, and going about thirty steps up a height which is situated to the east, and remarking that their flocks were reposing tranquilly on the side of the rising ground opposite to them, they turned about to re-seek the place which they had just left near the ravine. They were indeed unprepared for the sight which met their eyes when they looked round. Never, since the beginning of the world, had there been seen in these wild and precipitous spots a "*great Lady*" clothed like a Queen. How could she have come there, unless she had travelled through the air ? Moreover, what could have led such a personage to come into these arid wilds, for two-thirds of the year subject to the frost, and now, in the fine season, offering no protection against the heat of the sun ; a district, too, which was known only to poor shepherds, and to some hardy moun-

taineers? Maximin and Melanie were therefore strangely surprised when, after having satisfied themselves as to the state of their flocks, they saw, in the midst of a great brightness which surrounded her, a "beautiful Lady" sitting near the place where they had made their repast, her elbows resting on her knees, and her head between her two hands. She seemed given up to the keenest grief, and when she withdrew her hands, her face appeared watered with tears. At the approach of the two children, who were asking each other what this could mean, she raised herself majestically, and crossed her arms on her chest. Then were they astonished at the sight of the splendour which shone through all her person and around her. It was the Queen of Heaven; but the children had no idea that it was so: they wished to fix their gaze on her, but could scarcely endure the sight of her dazzling beauty. They remarked, however, the diadem which glittered on her forehead, and which was surmounted by a lofty Asiatic head-dress. She was clad in a kind of scarf, or royal cloak, in a white robe, and shoes which were clasped and sparkled above, and seemed to be garlanded with flowers. A chain of gold, three fingers in width, descended to her waist; another little chain of gold held a crucifix, about eight inches in length, on one side of which were seen a pair of pincers, half open, and hanging down; and

on the other a hammer,—symbols of the Passion of our Saviour, which seemed suspended without any support. At this wonderful sight, a feeling of inexpressible terror seized on the two children. Melanie, in her stupor, let fall to the ground her shepherd's staff; Maximin perceiving it, urged her to take it up again, telling her that she might have need of it to defend herself against this unknown lady, if she should attack them. Their fright increased, and they were about to run away, when Mary, with that voice, so sweet and motherlike, which calms all fears, said to them, "Fear not, my children; come, I am here to announce to you great tidings." At these words, Maximin and Melanie approached with all confidence: the terror which they had just felt vanished entirely. The Queen of Heaven herself advanced two steps to bring herself nearer to them. They had passed the stream, and now found themselves quite close to her, Maximin on her left, Melanie on her right. Mary, with her arms always crossed on her chest, spoke to them nearly in the following terms, in the tone of a person oppressed with affliction:—"My Son is angry, my children, with the people for transgressing His holy laws: He threatens soon to punish them: it is I who hold back His arm; but this arm is so heavy, that I can no longer sustain the weight of it, if my people will not submit. You cannot conceive the trouble which

I take on your behalf : your crimes demand vengeance : the just indignation of my Son would already have fallen on you, and you would have been struck in a terrible manner, if my intervention had not warded off His blows. Every other prayer would have been powerless, therefore mine is as unceasing as it is necessary for you that you should be spared. But alas ! those who are the most tender objects of my solicitude disdain my care and my affection, and they do not know what I am continually doing for them. My Son has given to men six days in which to work : the seventh He has kept for Himself. Sundays now, with the majority of men, are like other days ; they go no more to Mass when the weather is fine ; none go to church but elderly women ; all others work on Sunday during the greater part of the summer. Those who, at certain times, or on certain days, come to church, seem to have no other motive in doing so than to make a mock at religion, either within or without the holy place. Blasphemy is another crime which greatly angers my Son. His name is profaned and mixed up with the most horrible sentiments. Riding and driving, they blaspheme His name, as if they could not make their beasts go on without such oaths. These two crimes especially provoke the Divine wrath. Again, He is much irritated at the little respect shewn to the laws of the

Church. The days of abstinence are no longer observed by a vast multitude of Christians, who, like voracious animals, devour meat without any regard to the days on which it is interdicted. If the potatoes are spoiled, it is on account of the sins of the people, whom Heaven, by its chastisements, would reclaim to itself. Men have been already warned by the distress of last year." Melanie, not understanding what was meant by "*pommes de terre*," which in Dauphiny are called "*truffes*," turned towards Maximin, to ask what the Lady meant. "Ah, my children," said the Blessed Virgin, "you do not well understand French: well, I will express myself in your ordinary tongue." She then continued in the patois of the district: "The people took no account of the warnings which they received last year; on the contrary, when they found the potatoes spoiled, they cast them away with disgust and with oaths. They will fail still more, and you will soon be unable to find enough to live on." The kindness with which the Queen of Heaven spoke to these two children, and the confidence which she inspired in them, put them at their ease. Little Maximin was troubled at hearing that the principal food of the poor mountaineers would be spoiled; and forgetting that this misfortune was only threatened in case the people persevered in their transgressions, said to the Blessed Virgin: "Oh,

no, Madame ; the potatoes will not all fail ; we shall still be able to find some." The little child did not know to whom he was speaking. The Blessed Virgin continued : " My child, is not the wheat also spoiled this year ? " Maximin : " I do not know, Madame." The Blessed Virgin : " Don't you remember that one day your father was with you in a field which they call ' the Corner ? ' He bruised in his hand some ears of corn, and cried out, ' What will become of us this year, if all the wheat be like that ? ' Afterwards, when returning to Corps, he gave you a piece of bread, saying, ' Take, my child, and eat this bread now ; next year there is no saying who will have bread to eat. ' "

Maximin : " It is true, Madame ; I remember it ; but I did not at the moment think of it." The Blessed Virgin : " If the people persevere in their transgressions and their crimes ; if they continue to set themselves against the laws which they ought to observe, they must not look to have any more wheat or potatoes. Let them sow corn if they like : it will be spoiled ; for the insects shall eat it before it grows up, and the little which shall bear ears shall fall in dust when they thresh it on the barn-floor. The grapes shall rot ; the nuts shall turn bad. This calamity will cause a great famine. Little children, seized with convulsions through all their limbs, shall die in the arms of their mo-

thers and their nurses. The great and the rich themselves shall be in want of the mere necessities of life, and shall do penance by hunger. This is what shall happen, if my people will not submit; but if they be converted, it shall be quite otherwise. The potatoes shall grow even where they have not been sown. The rocks and stones shall change themselves into heaps of wheat. Yes, my children, piety, and a return to God, shall turn aside the ills with which my Son menaces mankind. Now-a-days, many men rise in the morning, and go to bed in the evening, without saying any prayers, as if God owed them every thing, and they owed nothing to God. You yourselves, my children, are you always particular in saying your prayers?" Maximin: "Not always, Madame." The Blessed Virgin: "Pray always, my children; night and morning: when you have no time to say all your prayers, say at least a Pater and an Ave. If you have the time to say more, say what you know, but at least the Lord's Prayer and the Angelical Salutation. Be very careful about that." After this advice the Blessed Virgin gave to each of the children a particular secret to keep; and, although she spoke in a high voice to each of them, the one did not understand what she said to the other. Then she addressed herself to them both, saying to them: "Be careful, my children, to let all my

people know what I have said to you : I reckon on your obedience ; let all my people know what I have said to you." After having said these words, Mary removed herself from the two shepherds : with one step she crossed the brook, and directed her way towards the place where Maximin and Melanie had ascended half an hour before to look after their flocks. This "beautiful Lady" had become infinitely dear to them by the kindness with which she had conversed with them, and it distressed them keenly to part with her. Since she had spoken to them, their intelligence had become singularly developed ; their memory, formerly so dull, had become so strong, that they forgot nothing of what had been said to them ; their disposition, lately so light and flighty, was become reflecting and serious ; religion, which formerly had exercised no power over them, now shewed a powerful influence in their souls. When they saw the "beautiful Lady" preparing to go, they attached themselves to her, and were unwilling to leave her : they followed her to the place where she stopped, that is to say, about thirty or forty steps from the spot where she had addressed them. Melanie had gone before her, and kept about two or three steps in front : Maximin remained at nearly the same distance behind her. They had both remarked that the grass did not bend under the feet of this mysterious

Lady, and that the flowers which were wreathed round her shoes were not rumpled in her walk. They had their eyes fixed on her, when they saw her rise from the ground to the height of about three or four feet. She remained suspended for some moments in the air, as it were to give the two shepherds time to consider her well. She cast her eyes sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left; afterwards, having turned her face northward, she insensibly melted away, like a thin snow-wreath exposed to the rays of a burning sun. First her head disappeared, afterwards her arms, and then her body: there only remained her feet visible. Maximin rushed forward to seize them before they disappeared; but meanwhile they were gone also. When the vision was entirely over, there only remained, during one or two minutes, a dazzling brilliancy in the space of the air in which the Blessed Virgin ascended. Then said the children: "Surely this Lady who came to talk to us, and who has vanished from our sight, must be a Saint. Yes," they repeated, "it is a Saint."

It was not yet time to take their flocks home. They allowed them to feed in the pastures a few hours more, and led them back about evening to their master's stables.

The two children had no sooner returned home, than, faithful to the commands which they had received, they thought themselves obliged to

declare what they had seen and heard. Then ensued what was to be expected under such circumstances : their story was considered as the deception of a dream, and they were turned into ridicule on account of their simplicity. But their words continued to be so energetic ; they always explained themselves with so much clearness and facility on this extraordinary event, that they soon brought conviction to the minds of those who were the most incredulous. All the hamlet was soon acquainted with the story. Peter Selme, at whose house Maximin lived, engaged him to go early the next morning, which was Sunday, to the Curé of La Salette, and to tell him, before the office, all that he had already told to himself. Maximin did so ; and, on the morning of September 20, he narrated to the venerable Curé of La Salette all the events of the preceding day. The priest heard him with surprise, interrogated him about every particular, and, as the story was now generally known in the village, he alluded to it in his sermon. After the Mass, every one must go and see the scene of such a wonderful event ; but nothing struck them so much as the sight of the fountain, which, the evening before, did not run at all, being in the summer time always dry, but which now sent forth a clear and pure stream. It has not ceased flowing since that time, and most wonderful miracles have been wrought by the use

of it, as will be shewn in the letters which are added to this account. Maximin and Melanie were taken from their master's house back to Corps, as soon as what had happened to them on the mountain was known. Since this time they have been taken care of and instructed by the religious of the Convent of La Providence, where they pass the greater part of the day. This story was spread through all the country ; and the result was, to a wonderful degree, the entire reformation of what had hitherto been a most blasphemous and rebrobrate race. This conversion is clear, beyond all question, to every one who either has lived in that country, or takes the trouble to make inquiries respecting it, and is alone no inconsiderable proof of the truth of the Apparition. God does not employ a lie to work His wonders, and regenerate the hearts of sinners.

In the pamphlet of the Bishop of La Rochelle there follows a very detailed account of his visit to the scene of the Apparition. He went thither for the simple purpose of investigating the truth of the story, being anxious to have it in his power to contradict or confirm it from his own convictions, when appealed to in his own diocese on the subject. In the diocese of Grenoble he finds the Bishop and clergy unanimous in asserting their faith in the story told by the children ; and the nearer he draws to the scene, he

discovers not only the universal belief on the subject, but the visible good effects which have resulted from it, in the reformed manner of life of the people. He goes on foot from Corps to the spot, accompanied by the children themselves, by a few ecclesiastics and laity of the place, and has every opportunity for testing the accuracy of the children's story. He also talks much with the children, and records very many of their replies to his remarks, and of their own questions, more especially of Maximin's. They discover a soberness and intelligence far beyond their years; indeed, this was that which first struck those to whom they originally told the story, that, whatever had happened to them, they had returned quite altered in character; they were no longer the dull, unheeding shepherd children that they had been before, but were now full of intelligence and steadiness of character; but still accompanied with all the innocent and light-hearted gaiety of their age. The tenacity with which they have kept their secret was also another means of drawing attention to them, and inducing a general belief in that which they did reveal. The Bishop closes his narrative by stating his entire conviction of the truth of the Apparition; but, at the same time, he protests against his opinion being considered that of any but a private individual; and declares his complete submission to any

judgment which may hereafter be passed by the Holy See on the facts which he has investigated. Some interesting letters addressed to the Bishop are added to his book, of a few of which translations are given here.

*Letter from the Bishop of Grenoble to the Bishop
of La Rochelle.*

MY LORD,—I can only applaud your intention of communicating to the whole of France, by a publication of your own, your conviction on the subject of the celebrated event at La Salette, and the impressions which your own mind received on the mountain. I shall look on your work as an excellent preliminary to the judgment which I shall myself have to pronounce, I hope, hereafter. I have ascertained the truth of the miracle wrought on behalf of a religious of St. Joseph, the sister St. Charles, of Avignon. Monseigneur the Archbishop is preparing a declaration on the subject. There are other instances of cure equally incontestable. They will be published also; and I am in a position to prove them all.

(Signed) ✠ PH. Bishop of Grenoble.

Case of Cure at Avignon.

Avignon, 1st May, 1847.

Nothing can be more wonderful than the cure of the *sœur hospitalière* of whom I have already spoken to you. This morning I received fresh details from one who had seen this spectre, and was afraid of her. The details are too long to give entire: her case was simply this. She was twenty-four years of age, had been in bed for eight years, and had arrived at the very last stage of consumption. For four months and a half she had taken only a little sugared water; her debility was so great, that, on the day before her cure, she fainted in bed through the slight exertion which she was obliged to undergo, in order to have her pillow changed. On the day of her cure, at seven in the morning, she expectorated her lungs; at a quarter past seven she was up and out of bed, and dressed herself as quickly as possible to go and attend to two other religious who were ill in the same room, who, hearing her speak, and seeing her walk, were so frightened that they began to weep and cry, and one of them fainted. At the noise in the infirmary the nun who was *tourière* runs in (the community were at Mass), and seeing the dying woman on her legs and dressed, she falls to the earth with astonishment and terror. The sister who was healed leaves the infirmary, runs to the church,

puts herself in a corner, on her knees on the pavement, and in this manner hears the rest of the Mass. After the Mass, the community, who perceived her, stop at once quite confounded : they can scarcely believe the evidence of their own eyes. The healed nun goes with them to the refectory for breakfast. The doctor came to pay his customary visit. It is not possible to declare the state of stupefaction into which he was thrown at the sight of the nun cured so perfectly and so instantaneously : not only was the sick woman perfectly healed, but, after having been in bed for eight years, she was full of strength and vigour in her limbs, and full of elasticity in her walk. The doctor could not believe his eyes ; he put her to the proof ; making her go up and down stairs, keeping her standing for a whole hour, making her carry, from one end of the room to the other, a table with articles on it weighing eighty pounds. This was not enough ; the sister offers to carry in her arms one of the sisters, and to set her down in another room, and permission being given, she takes up a sister, and carries her with ease and without fatigue fifty paces farther. “ That which most astonishes me in the Sister St. Charles,” writes the Superioress, “ is, to see that, from morning to evening, without any cessation, she is talking and telling the story of her cure to the prodigious number of visitors whom she receives ; she, who

could not endure the conversation of two people in her room, now talks to all the town who come to see her." For a fortnight people poured into the convent to be witnesses of the miracle. The very day of the cure the sister observed all the regulations of her rule, said the Office in the choir, and sings above all the others. Another religious, who had made the novena, was equally healed, but in another manner; she had been ill for two years, in consequence of a great fright which she experienced one night, when the Convent was found to be on fire. This fright turned her blood: her body became covered with sores, which they vainly tried to cure. At the end of four days of the novena, she found herself much better; on the sixth day all the sores were healed, and she was able to conform to the rules of the community.

*History of the Cure of the Sister Angelique Carbasse,
Religious of the Community of Perpignan (Sacré-Cœur).*

The Sister Angelique Carbasse, who had been in religion about eight years and a half, had not yet finished her noviciate when she was afflicted with a chlorotic affection, which brought on her all kinds of sufferings. First appeared an eruption: afterwards, in 1842, a pain in the epigas-

tric region, accompanied with a lingering fever, with frequent vomitings, and a tawny colour of the skin, which the doctors recognised as the symptoms of a serious disease well known to them. The Sister Angelique has frequently been in great danger from the quantity of blood which she vomited, and the impossibility which she found of taking any nourishment. The music in the chapel distressed her so, that they were obliged to suspend it when she assisted at Mass. During nearly a year the sister kept in the infirmary, almost always in bed ; but finding herself no better by this regimen, she applied herself, in 1845, to any sort of occupation which her strength allowed. This diseased state continued until lately, in different degrees, when her arm and the whole of her left side became swollen. This was recognised as a symptom of the decomposition of the blood, and, consequently, as a sign that the end was more or less near. According to the opinion of the medical man, the sick person would not be able to live the year out ; and even her family had been made acquainted with the physician's opinion. But how impenetrable are our Lord's designs !

On Wednesday, June 2, 1847, the Sister Angelique began a novena to our Lady of La Salette, which coincided with that of the fête of the Sacred Heart of Jesus ; and on Thursday, June 10, the eve of this fête, and the last day of the

novena, her wishes were fully answered. She did not find herself at all better during the first eight days : even on Wednesday night she had been worse than ever ; three vomitings of blood had reduced her to an extreme weakness, which did not prevent her from wishing to rise and go to Mass. But in less than an hour, two accidents, of the same nature as that of the night, came to prove her faith, which remained immovable. Always addressing herself to the Blessed Virgin, the sister persisted in her wish of taking nothing to eat, so that she might be able to go to Communion ; and it was between the two elevations of the Mass, that she perceived, through all her frame, a sudden revolution, which restored her strength and health. Her first emotion expressed itself by her tears ; and great was the astonishment of all the persons who surrounded her, when they saw her approach the holy Table with a firm step, and remain kneeling until the end of the thanksgiving. Then it was, that, after having been into her chamber to drink that which remained of the water of La Salette, she went to the Superioress to inform her of the grace which she had received. From this moment she observed entirely the directions of her rule, passed three days of abstinence in succession, and put her stomach to the trial of all sorts of food, which, for years, it had not been able to bear. She adopted also a laborious occupation, that of

ironing and carrying a basket of linen, carrying piles of plates supported against that side which, the evening before, had been so painful, and the swelling of which had entirely disappeared. At night her calm and soft sleep was interrupted by no suffering, and her renewed health is observable in the freshness of her colour, increasing bulk of body, &c.

Another Case of Cure.

I, the undersigned, Victorine Sauvet, twenty years of age, daughter of Antoine Sauvet, tailor, and of Madelaine Gueymard, living in the Commune of Lalley, Canton of Clelles, Department of Isère, testify the following facts:—I was living in service at the house of M. Bech, steward of the hospitals of the city of Marseilles, when I was suddenly told (it is now about seven weeks since) that my appeal for admission into the convent of an hospital had been fruitless. This news, for which I was not at all prepared, affected me keenly, and I wept much. Two days afterwards I experienced a great weakness in the eyes, I could only see objects when they were placed near to me. Since that time my eyes grew worse, and my sight became gradually weaker. MM. Regmonet, Dor, and Guez, physicians of Marseilles, attended me; the first two

thought that I was afflicted with a cataract : this was not the opinion of M. Guez, who thought that the optic nerve was shrunk. In spite of their care, my unhappy situation was in no ways alleviated, and for a month and four days I was entirely deprived of sight : I distinguished neither day nor night. Then it struck me that I would go on a pilgrimage to the mountain of La Salette, in the Canton of Corps, and ask my cure of the Blessed Virgin. Before I left Marseilles, I begged a priest of Notre Dame de la Garde to say a novena for me. The first Mass commenced on Friday, on the 17th of this month, at nine o'clock, and the last Mass of the novena was to have been said the day before yesterday, Saturday, at nine o'clock, at Notre Dame de la Garde. I arranged with the priest as to the time at which he would say Mass, as I wished to be on the mountain while he was saying it on the last day of the novena ; and there I was, at that time, at the foot of the cross set up in the spot where, last year, the Blessed Virgin appeared to the children. I sank on my knees to recite the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin ; then I got up, and stood at the foot of the cross, where I said the "Remember, O most holy Virgin Mary," and other prayers, which I united to those which they were at that moment saying for me at Notre Dame de la Garde. I washed my eyes with water from the spring, and I found

all through my eyes, from left to right, shooting pains and drawing of the nerves, which gave me much pain. I then asked with a loud voice of the Blessed Virgin, that she would heal me. I cried with all my strength, "O most holy Virgin, heal me." I drank a glass of water from the spring. It was now a quarter to ten o'clock, at which time the Mass which was being said for me should have been over. At the same moment I saw the little statue of the Blessed Virgin, which is placed in the niche in the centre of the cross. I shouted shouts of joy, which brought to me about fifty pilgrims who were there, and who could themselves see that I had been healed suddenly and completely. In testimony to this healing has been drawn up the *procès-verbal* which you present to me, signed by MM. Gernandes; Manin, Curé; Perrin, Curé; J. B. Blanchard, Marie Aglot, née Bayle; Jean Guisand, de Corps; Evrard Claire, de Corps; Louis Clapier, brother of M. A. Clapier, deputy for Marseilles; and by me,

ANTOINETTE SAUVET.

Corps, to-day, 27th September, 1847.—Below is written, in the handwriting of Victorine Sauvet: "I declare once more that I have been suddenly and completely cured.

(Signed) "VICTORINE SAUVET."

*Letter from M. Gerin, Curate of the Cathedral
of Grenoble.*

On September 19, the anniversary of the Apparition, I celebrated the holy Mass. During the three previous days the roads to Salette were covered with a multitude of pilgrims coming from distant places ; the churches were inundated with a crowd of the pious faithful, demanding in vain to make their confession. During the night of the 18th there were on the mountain 2000 persons, in spite of a beating rain and storm of wind, which lasted six hours. The umbrellas could not be opened. This multitude, to protect themselves from the cold, placed themselves in a square body, and so spent the whole night in singing the praises of the Blessed Virgin. It was universally agreed afterwards that no one had caught cold or cough on that night, or the slightest indisposition. The rain ceased at midnight, and did not return during the day : the summit of La Salette was crowned with a cold mist. The road from Corps to Salette was almost impassable from the rain of the evening before, not to mention the very bad state in which it usually is. The pilgrims stretched away in long lines chanting the Litanies and the Little Office, and singing hymns to the Blessed Virgin ; they consisted of people of all ages : none seemed too infirm, none too

young. Arrived at last on the holy mountain, they looked like a true encampment of Israel, sitting in groups in all directions. An altar with two fronts was erected; Mass was celebrated, and the communion given to great numbers of the faithful, many of whom, however, were prevented by the really dangerous press of people from satisfying their pious wishes. Then followed a sermon, then a prayer, and after that the "Salve Regina," the "Magnificat," and the "Sub Tuum." During the "Magnificat," the mist, which lay like a veil on the multitude, rose as if by enchantment, and then I witnessed the finest sight I ever beheld in my life. I had under my eyes sixty thousand persons. All sang together; tears sweeter than honey ran down their cheeks. Never did I see such a spectacle, neither at Lyons, at the arrival of the Bourbons from exile, nor at the appearance of Bonaparte at the return from the isle of Elba, nor at Notre Dame des Ermites, at the anniversary of the miraculous consecration of the chapel, nor at Rome, when Pius IX. was enthroned in St. Peter's; and yet I only saw then two-thirds of the whole number of pilgrims. Many men used to calculation computed the number present at sixty thousand; and, considering the great masses that were continually coming and going, the whole moving body was supposed to amount to one hundred thousand.

Circumstances of the interrogatory which Melanie and Maximin underwent before M. Peytard, Mayor of La Salette-Fallavaux, the day after the Apparition.

On the 19th of September, 1846, I gave directions to two of the country guard of my Commune to convoke the Municipal Council for the following morning, after Mass, in order to deliberate on some affairs of the Commune. On Sunday one of the guards came to tell me that the members of the council would be with me at the appointed hour. He added that, before entering my house, he had met two children ; he asked them where they were going, and they answered, that they were going to M. le Curé, to tell him that the day before, at three o'clock in the afternoon, they had seen on the mountain a " fine Lady," and that she had said such and such things to them. The guard, seeming somewhat taken with the story, asked me what I thought of it. I laughed at the whole, and said it was merely some stupidity on the part of the children. About three hours later, I went to church to hear the holy Mass. At the time for the sermon the Curate attempted to narrate to his parishioners the story which he had heard from the children ; he was much affected, so much so that he could scarcely be understood ; but I, having heard in the morning from the

guard the outline of the whole, could follow him more easily. After the holy Sacrifice I returned home ; the council assembled according to agreement, but, before alluding to the subject on which we had met, I asked them if they had heard of the event which had been mentioned by the Curate ; they said " No ;" but an instant after, a member of the council, who belongs to the hamlet des Ablandins, and lives near to the masters of the children, answered me : " Yesterday evening I heard my neighbours say, that the shepherds had seen on the mountain a Lady of extraordinary presence, who had said to them such and such things. They went this morning to see the curate, and it is to their story no doubt that he has alluded." The members of the council seemed to attach no importance to the story ; and we proceeded at once to business. My mind was entirely occupied with this mysterious affair ; and after dinner, without saying any thing to my family, I went off to the hamlet des Ablandins, to interrogate the children. First, I made Melanie give her story, having put Maximin into another room by himself. She gave me the whole story, to which I listened without saying a word. When she had finished, I said to her, " Be very attentive, my child ; and mind and say nothing more or less than what really happened." She answered, " I have said all that this Lady told us to say." Then I made

little Maximin come, and put Melanie in a separate room. His account was identical with hers. I then put them face to face, and said with kindness to them, that what they had told me was clearly a lie, and that God would punish them severely if they continued to persist in it; and that I advised them, for their own sake, to say at once that it was false, and that they had been induced to act thus from some particular motives. I suggested some. I then took a packet of forty francs, which I had brought with me purposely, and told them that they should have the money if they would acknowledge the deception. They said that they thought little of my money, and added, "Should you give us, M. le Maire, this house full of crowns to say the contrary to that which we have seen and heard, we could not do so." Seeing their steadfastness, I began to threaten them with prison and other punishments; to this they answered, "That my threats gave them no more fear than my money gave them pleasure." The following Sunday, September 27, I went, accompanied by several persons and by the children, to the scene of the Apparition. There I put new questions to them. I made them place themselves in the same position in which they were when they lay down to sleep, when they rose up and went to look for their flocks, when they saw, according to their own expression, the "fine Lady," and when she

said, "Come, my children, I have some great tidings to announce to you." Then I made them several times trace out the ground which they passed over with the Blessed Virgin, from the place of her apparition to that of her ascension. Their story was, in the minutest points, the same as that which they had told me on the previous Sunday, and the same precisely as that which they tell at present.

(Signed) P. PEYTARD,
Mayor of La Salette-Fallavaux.

Oct. 2, 1847.



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